Paper ID: 29921
oral

SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)
Space Culture (9)

Author: Mr. Sascha Pohflepp
Germany

THE MINOVITCH METHOD AIMS, IN CONVERSATION AND COLLABORATION WITH SCIENTISTS AND ENGINEERS, TO EXPLORE AND EXTEND THE WAYS IN WHICH WE ARE CAPABLE OF DEPARTING FROM EARTH, THE SOLAR SYSTEM AND BEYOND.

Abstract

Our departure from Earth is resting on two of the greatest ideas in history: Konstantin Tsiolkovsky's rocket equation, which eventually put Yuri Gagarin into Earth orbit and Michael Minovitch's planetary slingshot technique that helped to make JPL's Voyager probe to leave the solar system in 2013. Both were highly creative achievements, manifesting the best of our capabilities as a species. But what technology may follow to enable us to reach the nearest starts or in the very far future even escape from the Milky Way? To explore some of these questions I am in the process of engaging scientists and technologists who are looking at questions of propulsion, celestial mechanics, and interstellar navigation, possibly also tapping into synthetic biology and other fields from which more unusual approaches could come. The goal is to create speculative objects that emerge from the conversations with the aforementioned experts: parts of possible space ships, proposed life forms, grand schemes. Artifacts from our own potential deep future as strange as Konstantin Tsiolkovsky's drawings of space ships must have seemed like in 1903. The merit of a project like The Minovitch Method and previous work such as Camera Futura lies in the act of trying to access a certain future by speculating about it with artistic means rather than the means of science and engineering alone. The result is neither a visualization of scientific circumstances nor pure science-fiction, but rather something that sits between and treads the fine line between possibility and imagination. Even if the puzzle of how to actually get there will still be far from complete, it will be more real than before. I strongly believe that the age of rigid segregation between art, design, science and engineering are quickly coming to an end. Projects that actively seek to facilitate an exchange between those communities and the public play a crucial role in the process in order to create a platform on which to discuss the realities of humanity's future in space, questions around deep time and our limits to predicting our own technological future.